

Message Text

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ACTION NODS-00

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S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 TEL AVIV 1009

NODIS

FOR THE SECRETARY FROM THE CHARGE'

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, IS, OVIP (VANCE, CYRUS)
SUBJECT: SECVISIT: THE ATMOSPHERE

1. WE HAVE FORWARDED A NUMBER OF MESSAGES ON SUBJECTS WHICH WE HOPE WILL BE USEFUL IN PREPARING YOUR BRIEFING PAPERS. THIS MESSAGE ATTEMPTS TO DESCRIBE THE GENERAL PSYCHOLOGICAL SITUATION - SOMETHING OF THE ATMOSPHERE IN ISRAEL AT THIS TIME.

2. IN SUMMARY, I THINK YOU WILL FIND A MILD CLIMATE (CERTAINLY Milder THAN IN THE U.S. THIS YEAR); A SUPER-CHARGED POLITICAL ATMOSPHERE DUE TO THE LABOR PARTY CONVENTION, WHICH FOLLOWS HARD UPON YOUR VISIT, AS WELL AS TO THE SUBSEQUENT ELECTIONS, AND, NOT FAR BENEATH THE SURFACE, A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF APPREHENSION ABOUT THE POLICIES AND INTENTIONS OF THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION.

THIS APPREHENSION WILL BE TRANSLATED INTO CAREFUL PROBING ON SPECIFIC ISSUES.

3. THERE IS CONSIDERABLE SATISFACTION THAT ISRAEL IS THE FIRST COUNTRY YOU WILL VISIT AS SECRETARY OF STATE. TO
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THE ISRAELIS, THIS UNDERLINES THEIR CLOSE RELATIONS WITH US. THEY KNOW THAT YOU HAVE SAID YOU ARE COMING TO LISTEN TO THEIR VIEWS ABOUT HOW PROGRESS CAN BE MADE TOWARD PEACE IN THE AREA AND IN PARTICULAR THEIR VIEWS ABOUT A RETURN TO GENEVA. HOWEVER, A NUMBER OF MATTERS HAVE ARISEN - OR ESCALATED - SINCE THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF YOUR VISIT WHICH THEY BELIEVE REQUIRE ATTENTION AND WHICH MAY DETRACT FROM THE TIME DEVOTED TO YOUR BASIC PURPOSE. AMONG THESE SPECIFIC ISSUES (IRRITANTS IS PROBABLY A BETTER WORD) THE FOLLOWING MAJOR ONES STAND OUT AS OF THIS

WRITING; THE SITUATION IN SOUTH LEBANON (PROVIDED IT IS NOT ON THE ROAD TO SETTLEMENT); THE DENIAL OF THE ISRAELI REQUEST TO SELL KFIR FIGHTERS TO ECUADOR; AND CLUSTER BOMBS. TO THEM SHOULD BE ADDED THE PERENNIAL ISSUE OF ISRAELI DESIRE FOR ADDITIONAL AID. THESE ISSUES HAVE BEEN RECEIVING INORDINATE ATTENTION IN THE PRESS WHERE THEY HAVE BEEN MENTIONED AS SUBJECTS FOR DISCUSSION WITH YOU.

4. ON THE PEACE ISSUE, IT IS EASIER TO SET FORTH WHAT THE ISRAELIS WILL NOT DO THAN WHAT THEY ARE PREPARED TO DO. FOR EXAMPLE, INDICATIONS ARE THAT THEY WILL NOT (A) RETURN TO THEIR BORDERS OF JUNE 4, 1967; (B) GIVE UP CONTROL OF A UNITED JERUSALEM; (C) PERMIT A SEPARATE INDEPENDENT (PALESTINIAN) STATE ON THE WEST BANK; AND (D) NEGOTIATE WITH THE PLO. WHAT THEY WILL DO IS HAZIER, CHIEFLY BECAUSE THEY HAVE NOT LET THEMSELVES BE PINNED DOWN TO DEFINE CERTAIN KEY TERMS WITH PRECISION, AT LEAST THUS FAR. THESE TERMS INCLUDE "DEFENSIBLE BORDERS," "PEACE," AND "PALESTINIAN RIGHTS," AMONG OTHERS. WHILE THEY FREQUENTLY MAINTAIN THAT "EVERYTHING IS SUBJECT TO NEGOTIATION," THIS STATEMENT DOES NOT APPEAR VERY HELPFUL IN VIEW OF THE THINGS THEY SAY THEY WILL NOT DO AND THEIR UNWILLINGNESS TO DEFINE IMPORTANT TERMS. UNTIL SUCH BASIC TERMS ARE, IN FACT, DEFINED IT IS DIFFICULT TO SEE HOW ONE CAN CUT THROUGH THE SUSPICION AND DISTRUST TO ARRIVE AT
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ANY SORT OF FRAMEWORK FOR AN OVERALL SETTLEMENT WHICH BOTH SIDES MIGHT CONSIDER.

5. THE DIFFICULTY OF AN OPEN AND DEMOCRATIC STATE LIKE ISRAEL NEGOTIATING WITH AUTHORITARIAN STATES CANNOT BE OVERLOOKED (AND IS CERTAINLY NOT OVERLOOKED BY THE ISRAELIS). THUS THE GOVERNMENT OF ISRAEL AND THE INDIVIDUAL POLITICAL PARTIES WHICH MAKE UP ITS BODY POLITIC ARE AT PRESENT LARGELY INHIBITED FROM MAKING ANY FIRM COMMITMENTS OR CONCESSIONS WHICH COULD BE USED AGAINST THEM IN THE MAY ELECTIONS. AS AN ILLUSTRATION, THERE HAS BEEN NO RECENT TALK OF ATTEMPTING TO CARRY OUT THE PRIME MINISTER'S NINE MONTH-OLD PLEDGE TO REMOVE THE ILLEGAL SETTLERS FROM QADOUM, EVEN NOW THAT QADOUM'S SUPPORTERS IN THE NATIONAL RELIGIOUS PARTY ARE NO LONGER IN THE GOVERNMENT. THEREFORE, NOT MUCH CAN BE EXPECTED IN REGARD TO OBTAINING PLEDGES OF GIVING UP TERRITORY OR REMOVING ILLEGAL SETTLEMENTS BEFORE THE ISRAELIS SEE THE MAKE-UP OF THE GOVERNMENT WHICH WILL BE FORMED THIS SUMMER (PROBABLY AFTER TORTUOUS NEGOTIATION). THE ISRAELIS ALSO MAINTAIN, WITH SOME JUSTICE, THAT THEY CANNOT SPELL OUT THE TERRITORIAL CONCESSIONS THEY ARE PREPARED TO MAKE SO LONG AS THERE ARE NO CONCRETE SIGNS THAT THE ARABS ARE INTERESTED IN TRUE PEACE AND WILLING TO ACCEPT THE

EXISTENCE OF ISRAEL AS A MIDDLE EAST STATE. THE ARABS
SEE IT THE OTHER WAY AROUND, LEADING TO A VICIOUS CIRCLE.
(THIS IS AN OVERSIMPLIFICATION, OF COURSE, IGNORING SUCH
MAJOR ISSUES AS JERUSALEM AND THE STATUS OF THE PALESTINIANS.)
THE ISRAELIS WILL GRANT THAT THE ARABS HAVE BEEN SAYING
THAT THEY WANT TO RETURN TO THE PEACE TABLE, BUT THEY
DESCRIBE THIS AS ONLY VERBAL FLEXIBILITY AND FORESEE NO
CHANGE IN THE ARAB DEMANDS ON THEM. THEY ARE SKEPTICAL
WHETHER THE TWO SIDES WOULD EVEN FIND IT POSSIBLE TO
ADDRESS THE SAME SUBJECTS RATIONALLY AT GENEVA. HENCE
THEY SEE LITTLE NEED OR MERIT IN CHANGING THEIR OWN
POSITIONS AT THIS TIME, AND ARE UNDER LITTLE DOMESTIC
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PRESSURE TO DO SO.

6. PRIME MINISTER RABIN WILL WANT TO HAVE HIMSELF POR-
TRAYED DURING YOUR VISIT AS A STATESMAN ACCEPTED ON
EQUAL TERMS BY REPRESENTATIVES OF THE GREAT POWERS.

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THIS IS ALMOST AN ELECTORAL "MUST" FOR HIM, SINCE HIS
STRENGTH DOES NOT LIE IN HIS HANDLING OF DOMESTIC ISSUES.
HE IS COUNTING VERY MUCH ON AN INVITATIO TO VISIT THE
PRESIDENT, THE SOONER THE BETTER. RABIN HAS SELDOM
EVIDATED FROM THE GOAL HE OUTLINED PUBLICLY IN DECEMBER
1974 OF WANTING ANUMBER OF "QUIET YEARS" IN WHICH ISRAEL
COULD DEVELOP AND STRENGTHEN ITSELF FOR THE LONG PULL.
THESE QUIET YEARS WERE, OF COUSE, MEANT FOR AN ISRAEL
WITHIN ITS PRESENT AREA OF CONTROL, ALTHOUGH THAT WAS
NEVER SO BALDLY STATED AND HE DID CONCEDE TERRITORY AND
OIL IN THE SINAI II AGREEMENT. RABIN IS UNDER SERIOUS
CHALLENGE FROM SHIMON PERES FOR LEADERSHIP OF THE LABOR
PARTY AND, WHILE APPEARING STATESMANLIKE, HE WILL NOT WANT
TO APPEAR TO BE OFFERING CONCESSIONS FOR WHICH HE
COULD BE CRITICIZED. CONSEQUENTLY, IT IS NOT ANTICIPATED

THAT AT THIS STAGE HE WILL BE PREPARED TO INDICATE MAJOR CHANGES IN THE ISRAELI POSITIONS WITH WHICH WE HAVE BECOME FAMILAR. THE FACT THAT PROFESSOR AVINERI FLOATED THE OTHER DAY THE POSSIBILITY OF FURTHER INTERIM AGREEMENTS (WITHOUT SPELLING OUT WHAT THEY MIGHT BE) IS SIGNIFICANT AS IT PROBABLY REPRESENTS WHAT THE GOVERNMENT FEELS IS THE MAXIMUM ATTAINABLE IN THE NEAR FUTURE. IF THEY SUGGEST THAT POSSIBILITY TO YOU IT WOULD PROBABLY INCLUDE A RESUMPTION OF THE U.S. ROLE AS INTERMEDIARY AND AN END
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FOR THE TIME BEING TO PLANS TO RETURN TO GENEVA - WHICH HAS BECOME INCREASINGLY LESS ATTRACTIVE TO THEM IN ANY CASE.

7. BEYOND THAT, RABIN HAS STATED REPEATEDLY, AND IN THIS HE IS SUPPORTED BY MOST OF THE OTHER LEADERS, THAT THERE CANNOT BE A THIRD STATE IN THE AREA OF THE ORIGINAL MANDATE, WHICH TRANSLATES TO MEAN NO TRULY INDEPENDENT PALESTINIAN STATE SINCE THEY BELIEVE SUCH A STATE WOULD INEVITABLY BE RADICAL AND HOSTILE TO ISRAEL. THE PROBLEMS CONNECTED WITH ISRAEL'S ADMINISTRATION OF THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES ARE PROBABLY GOING TO INCREASE, AND MANY ISRAELIS SEE LITTLE POINT IN MAINTAINING THEIR CONTROL OF AN ANTAGONISTIC ARAB POPULATION IF THEY HAVE TO DO SO BY MILITARY MEANS, PARTICULARLY IF UNREST THERE COULD BE CONTAGIOUS FOR THE HALF-MILLION ARABS IN ISRAEL PROPER BY THE SAME TOKEN, HOWEVER, THERE IS MOST PROBABLY A MAJORITY HERE FOR THE MAINTENANCE OF ISRAELI MILITARY "STRONG POINTS" FOR

DEFENSIVE PURPOSES IN THE PRESENT OCCUPIED AREAS, SOMETHING NOT FAR FROM THE ALLON PLAN. IF IT MEANT A CHANCE FOR FINAL PEACE, ISRAEL CONCEIVABLY MIGHT BE BROUGHT TO CONSIDER SOME FORM OF WEAK DEMILITARIZED STATE ON THE WEST BANK AND GAZA PROVIDED IT CONTROLLED THE STRONG POINTS DEEMED NECESSARY.

8. IN THE FINAL ANALYSIS, THERE IS A BROAD FUNDAMENT OF UNDERSTANDING THAT ISRAEL'S SECURITY REQUIRES THE FRIENDSHIP AND ASSISTANCE OF THE U.S. FOR MANY YEARS IN THE FUTURE. ISRAELIS CONCEDE THAT THIS ASSISTANCE HAS BEEN GENEROUSLY GIVEN IN RECENT YEARS, BUT ARE CONCERNED THAT THE LEVEL MAY BE REDUCED. AS MENTIONED ABOVE, IT IS ALMOST CERTAIN THAT A STRONG EFFORT WILL BE MADE TO HAVE YOU ASK THE PRESIDENT TO INCREASE HIS REQUEST FOR FY-78 OF \$1.785 BILLION, ALREADY INCREASED FROM THE AMOUNT SUBMITTED BY THE PREVIOUS ADMINISTRATION. WE
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HAVE EXPLAINED IN A PREVIOUS MESSAGE WHY WE THOUGHT SUCH

AN INCREASE WAS NOT JUSTIFIED. THE AID WE GIVE IS THE
PRINCIPAL FORM OF LEVERAGE WE HAVE AND IT SHOULD BE USED

NOT ONLY TO MAINTAIN THEIR SECURITY BUT TO PERSUADE THEM
TO MOVE IN DESIRED DIRECTIONS BOTH WITH RESPECT TO
TERRITORIAL CONCESSIONS AND TO STRUCTURED CHANGE IN THE
ISRAELI ECONOMY. USING THIS LEVERAGE IS INEVITABLY SEEN
HERE AS "PRESSURE," ALTHOUGH MUCH OF THE PRESSURE IS SELF-
GENERATED. THERE IS NO DISPUTE AMONG THE TOP LEADERSHIP
THAT THEY WOULD LIKE (THEY SAY REQUIRE) MORE FUNDS, AND
RABIN, PERES AND ALLON CAN BE EXPECTED TO MENTION THIS TO
YOU. ONLY MOSHE DAYAN HAS INDICATED A TENDENCY IN THE

OTHER DIRECTION - AND AS YOU KNOW HE IS NO LONGER IN
POWER.

9. IF I SEEM TO CLOSE ON A PESSIMISTIC NOTE, IT IS BECAUSE
I HAVE NOTED RECENT STATEMENTS FROM MANY QUARTERS THAT
CHANCES FOR PROGRESS TOWARD MIDDLE EAST NEGOTIATIONS ARE
BETTER NOW THAN THEY HAVE BEEN FOR SOME TIME. PERHAPS
SO, BUT SEEN FROM TEL AVIV, THE IMPROVEMENT IS ONLY
MARGINAL. THE PROBLEMS I HAVE DESCRIBED ABOVE ARE SO
DIFFICULT THAT THEY CAN BE SOLVED ONLY WITH GOOD WILL
AND WILLINGNESS TO COMPROMISE AND I HAVE NOT DETECTED
VERY MUCH OF THIS ON EITHER SIDE.
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